

Children, Youth & Family Consortium

CYFC Monthly

CYFC Monthly — February 2015

Partnership Builds a Better Space

We've been thinking a lot lately about how thankful we are for our partners.

Thanks to the incredible work and dedication of over 55 active partners and the generous funds provided by the Extension Issue Area Grant, CYFC is partnering to create innovative learning spaces for children at Bruce Vento Elementary School in East Saint Paul. Through reciprocal relationships, this project is capitalizing on the strengths of school staff, community leaders, as well as University of Minnesota faculty, staff and students to enhance the opportunities for students at the school. You can read about our progress across all areas of the project in our [brief report](#) and check out our project [webpage](#).

But today, we wanted to share with you the incredible power of partnership that has led to the design of a calming room space for the students of Bruce Vento Elementary School.

What is a calming room?

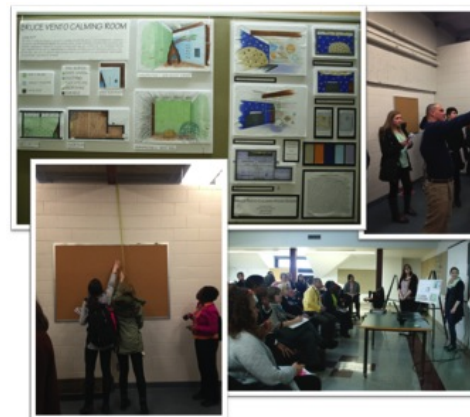
Calming rooms are used as safe places for students to practice skills aimed at regulating their behaviors and emotions when they are having difficulty in the classroom. Calming rooms offer a therapeutic space full of soft surfaces, gentle music, and cozy spaces for students to use their five senses to help soothe emotional outbursts and develop regulation and coping skills. Research suggests these spaces contribute to fewer numbers of behavioral outbursts requiring lengthy removal from the classrooms and the use of other harsh disciplinary measures.¹

How was it designed?

In an effort to create a therapeutic design that most effectively utilizes an existing space at Bruce Vento, the project team partnered with the University of Minnesota's College of Design. Under the instruction of Professor Abi Asojo, 23 students in their sophomore year worked collaboratively to propose designs for a calming room space that reflected the school's needs, project budget, and structural bounds of the room. This was an exciting partnership opportunity between University undergraduate students and Bruce Vento Elementary School staff to create a calming room space to meet the needs of students at the school.

Throughout a series of discussions, students and Bruce Vento staff proposed the following ideas and modifications for the space:

- Adjusting the current lighting to include dimming features.
- Dropping the ceiling or adding texture to the ceilings, such as secured curtains or other soft and light-colored draping, to mimic the sky.
- Adding furniture or a therapeutic swing that could be secured to the floor or hung from the ceiling to provide additional seating and individualized space.



UMN College of Design students create their designs, and share their ideas for a calming room at Bruce Vento Elementary School.

- Incorporating storage areas, such as cabinets, to the walls to provide a place for sensory items, such as weighted blankets or soft toys, to be kept.
- Using calming or nature-themed color tones for murals on the walls.

On February 11th, the University students presented their final designs which were creatively responsive to Bruce Vento's needs, while completely transforming the space into a calming oasis. The calming room team is currently working to incorporate the expertise of the behavioral staff at Bruce Vento to decide on the final design. We anticipate beginning construction of the calming room in the coming months.

Why we're thankful

Without the involvement of our incredibly generous and dedicated partners, this effort would not be possible. We extend our sincere thanks to the wonderful students in the College of Design for giving their time and talents to benefit the children at Bruce Vento Elementary School, and for all of the project partners who have shared their valuable expertise on the development of this project. It is both humbling to think about how far we have come in such a short time and exciting to think of how far we can go together to achieve great things for the children and families of Bruce Vento Elementary School.

With Sincere Gratitude,
Sara Langworthy, Judy Myers, Nora Fox

References

1. Moore KM. The Sensory Connection. 2010. Available at:
<http://www.sensoryconnectionprogram.com/index.php>.

Consortium News

Creating trauma-sensitive practices, organizations and communities: Building on our experiences

Sponsors: University Of Minnesota Extension, Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health, and the University Of Minnesota Ambit Network

Date: April 28, 2015

Cost: \$90-\$350 (for the entire conference)

Location: Duluth, MN

Join CYFC for the sixth annual University of Minnesota/MN Association for Children's Mental Health Research to Practice training series.

Many of us are creating trauma-sensitive practices in our work with clients, students, organizations and communities. We have varied approaches to this work, and a great deal of expertise working in different settings and with different populations. What can we learn from one another? What are the most effective practices and how can they be used? How can we engage with one another as we explore more deeply how to build trusting relationships, maintain our own well being, and manage programs and partnerships sensitively?

Participants in this daylong training will engage within structured small and large group conversations. Presenters will share their own best practices from a variety of settings and communities. Conversations will be captured and shared with participants following the training, and opportunities for creating a trauma-sensitive learning community will be explored. Find more information [here](#).

Youth programs as powerful settings for social and emotional learning

Sponsor: Minnesota 4-H Foundation's Howland Family Endowment for Youth Leadership Development

Date: May 15, 2015

Cost: Free

Location: Minneapolis, MN

CYFC's Cari Michaels helped develop this symposium that focuses on promoting social and emotional learning in youth program settings. You'll learn about and discuss recent, path-breaking research on how youth learn skills such as strategic thinking and emotional management, and what strategies experienced leaders use to facilitate this development. Register [here](#).

University & Community Announcements

The Summer Public Health Institute

Sponsor: University Of Minnesota School of Public Health

Dates: May 26 - June 12, 2015

Cost: \$595-\$913

Credit: 1 academic credit or 15 continuing education contact hours

Location: University Of Minnesota West Bank Campus TBD

This is an introductory course about community-based participatory research (CBPR) intended for graduate students and community practitioners interested in adding CBPR to their repertoire of effective approaches to understanding and addressing social and health disparities. Topics such as the purpose and applications of CBPR; partnership formation and maintenance; issues of power, trust, race, class, and social justice; conflict resolution; ethical issues; CBPR's relationship to cultural knowledge systems will be explored. The course has a required pre-course component (6-8 hours) consisting of readings, lectures and exercises designed to prepare you for in-class discussion and experiential learning. Students will complete a final individual or group project of their choosing. Find more information and registration [here](#). [no longer active]

Schoolyard Gardens Conference — Everyone in the Garden

Sponsors: Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, Minnesota Schoolyard Gardens Coalition and the University Of Minnesota Extension Master Gardner Volunteer Program

Dates: February 27-28, 2015

Cost: \$65-\$140

Location: Chanhassen, MN

At this conference, you will learn how to meet academic standards, engage with community partners, and learn about agriculture and healthy eating through this hands-on opportunity for educators while connecting with natural systems. Suitable for all levels of experience, you will explore innovative strategies for creating a schoolyard garden. Speakers include Arden Bucklin-Sporer, Executive Director of Education Outside and Jean Larson, Ph.D., Manager, University of Minnesota Nature-Based Therapeutic Services-Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. Learn more [here](#). [inactive link]

Understanding the Defending Childhood Initiative: Policy Implications for the Child Trauma Field

Sponsor: The National Center for Child Traumatic Stress and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Date: February 25, 2015

Cost: Free

Location: Online

Since the Defending Childhood Initiative (DCI) was launched in 2010, the Department of Justice has awarded grants around the country to develop strategic plans for comprehensive community-based efforts that will further demonstrate the goals of this initiative. This webinar will guide participants in understanding the DCI and its policy implications for the child trauma field. Julian Ford, PhD, Catherine Pierce, Brian H. O'Connor, MS, and Betsy McAlister Groves, LICSW will discuss the history and current status of the DCI and highlight current and future practice and policy implications for those committed to addressing the needs of children and families exposed to trauma. Find more information [here](#).

Emerging Neuromodulation Treatments for Psychiatric Disorders

Sponsor: Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health

Date: March 19, 2015

Cost: \$79

Location: West St. Paul, MN

Kathryn Cullen, MD and Kelvin Lim, MD will address neuromodulation as a new intervention modality for the treatment of psychiatric disorders. This workshop will first present an overview of the different forms of neuromodulation methods currently available. Presenters will discuss several examples of how these methods have been applied to psychiatric disorders. Additionally, current research and clinical efforts being pursued by the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Minnesota will be shared. Register [here](#).

Job Opportunities

Crisis Stabilization Supervisor — Washburn Center for Children

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